GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:656
ANSWERED ON:03.03.2008
USO FUND FOR LANDLINE TELEPHONE CONNECTIONS
Angadi Shri Suresh Chanabasappa

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the private telecom contractors who have won the contracts to role out fixed line telephones in rural household have sought support from the Universal Services Obligation (USO) Fund;

(b) if so, whether the Department of Telecom had also signed agreement with Reliance Communications and Tata Telecom Service in the year, 2005 to provide support from the USO Fund for setting up fixed line telephone across 1685 districts;

(c) if so, whether the Government has provided the amount to these telecom operators;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the latest position for fixed telephone lines in rural households; and

(f) the time by which Landline phone lines in households in rural areas will be fully completed?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) has entered into an agreement with M/s Bharat Snchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), M/s Reliance Communications Limited (RCL), M/s. Tata Teleservices Limited (TTL), M/s TTL (Maharashtra) for installation of Individual Rural Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs) in 1685 commercially unviable Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs) in the country. The share of SDCAs among these companies was 1267, 203, 172 and 43 respectively. RDELs installed during the period 1.4.2005 and 31.3.2007 are eligible for subsidy support under these agreements.

Subsidy support is also being provided at the same rates for the RDELs installed in the eligible SDCAs during the period 1.4.2002 and 31.3.2005. Agreements to this effect were signed with M/s BSNL and M/s RCL in May, 2005 and August 2005 respectively.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The amount of subsidy disbursed to private telecom operators is given below:-

Name of Telecom Operator	Total amount of subsidy disbursed for RDELs installed during 01.04.2005 to 31.03.2007	Total amount of subsidy disbursed for RDELs installed during 01.04.2002 to 31.3.2005
RCL	278.92	19.22
TTL	184.90	0
TTL (Mah)	123.29	0

(e) 25,64,577 RDELs have been provided with subsidy from USO Fund during the period from 01.04.2005 to 31.3.2007. In addition, 18,65,690 RDELs have been provided with subsidy support from USOF during the period from 01.04.2002 to 31.03.2005.

(f) The target date for installation of RDELs under this scheme has been extended by one year period from 01.04.2007 to 31.03.2008.